



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

June 2004

2003 Water Quality Report County Service Area #23—Santa Margarita

To our customers

The County of San Luis Obispo is pleased to present this annual report describing the quality of your drinking water. We sincerely hope this report gives you the information you seek and have a right to know. Este informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua de beber. Tradúzcalo ó hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

YOUR WATER SUPPLY

Your water comes from groundwater wells located in Santa Margarita. The water is cleaned through a natural filtration process as it trickles down through the ground. During this process, water may also pick up minerals or contaminants found in the soil, either natural or man-made. Groundwater is normally very clean and is simply disinfected with chlorine to help minimize viral and bacterial contamination.

The wells are routinely monitored for contaminants and the results are submitted to the California Department of Health Services (DHS). The findings are evaluated relative to the California Drinking Water Primary and Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) standards. In 2002, an assessment was completed on the Santa Margarita wells which included a review of water system information, meetings with water system staff, global positioning system mapping, and field reconnaissance. The field surveys were conducted to locate and assess the vulnerability of the Santa Margarita water system sources to possible contamination. The source assessment concluded that the wells are most vulnerable to the following activities for which no associated contaminant has been detected in the water supply: gasoline station. A copy of the complete assessment is available at:

Department of Health Services
1180 Eugenia Place, Suite 200
Carpinteria, CA 93013

or

County of San Luis Obispo
Department of Public Works
County Government Center, Room 207
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

You may also request a summary of the assessment be sent to you by contacting Kurt Souza, DHS District Engineer, Santa Barbara District at (805) 566-1326, or John Beaton, Water Quality Manager, County of San Luis Obispo at (805) 781-5111.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The Santa Margarita CSA Advisory Committee meets the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 pm in the Community Hall. The public is welcome to attend. The San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors meets every Tuesday (except the 5th Tuesday in a month) in the board chambers located in the Government Center Annex, 1050 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo. The Board holds budget hearings during the month of June. Interested persons should check the Board's agendas for specific dates. Agendas for all Board of Supervisors meetings are posted in some County libraries, the County Government Center, and on the Board of Supervisors internet web site at <http://www.co.slo.ca.us>.

KEY TERMS

Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) - The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water.

Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) and Public Health Goal (PHG) - The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs are set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and PHGs are set by the California Environmental Protection Agency.

Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL) - The level of a disinfectant added for water treatment that may not be exceeded at the consumer's tap.

Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG) - The level of a disinfectant added for water treatment below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs are set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Primary Drinking Water Standards (PDWS) - MCLs for contaminants that affect health along with their monitoring and reporting requirements, and water treatment requirements. Primary MCLs are set as close to the PHGs (or MCLGs) as is economically and technologically feasible.

KEY TERMS (Continued)

Secondary Drinking Water Standards (SDWS) – MCLs for contaminants to protect the taste, odor, or appearance of the drinking water. Contaminants with SDWSs do not affect health at the MCL levels.

Treatment Technique (TT) – A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

Regulatory Action Level (AL) – The concentration of a contaminant that, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirement which a water system must follow.

No Standard (NS) – Contaminant for which there is no established MCL.

Not Detected (ND) – Contaminant is not detectable at testing limit.

Not Analyzed (NA) – Contaminant was not analyzed.

pCi/L – picoCuries per liter (a measure of radioactivity)

ppm – parts per million, or milligrams per liter (mg/L)

ppb – parts per billion, or micrograms per liter (µg/L)

CU – color units

NTU – Nephelometric Turbidity Unit

TON – Threshold Odor Number

LI – Langelier Index; Noncorrosive = Any positive value, Corrosive = Any negative value

SOURCES OF DRINKING WATER

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.

Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

- *Microbial contaminants*, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.
- *Inorganic contaminants*, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming.
- *Pesticides and herbicides*, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses.
- *Organic chemical contaminants*, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems.
- *Radioactive contaminants* which can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the USEPA and the California Department of Health Services (DHS) prescribe regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. DHS regulations also establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health.

WATER NOTES

Water from the main community well is corrosive, which allows metals from water lines and faucets to dissolve into the water. To render this water less corrosive, a combination of caustic soda and a corrosion inhibitor (polyphosphate) are added. Measured levels of lead and copper at customers' taps have been within allowed levels since the combined corrosion control began.

This same well is shallow and considered to be "under the influence of surface water" which means it is more vulnerable to microbial and other contaminants. In recognition of this, a higher level of disinfectant is maintained and held longer before delivery to customers.

Santa Margarita Well #3 has high levels of iron and manganese. High iron and manganese can cause staining and brown water complaints. This well has filtration equipment that reduces the amount of iron and manganese to acceptable levels.

All community water systems must comply with the new Federal EPA arsenic MCL of 10 ppb by January 23, 2006. At times, raw water from the Santa Margarita Well #3 has had arsenic levels above the 10 ppb standard. The iron and manganese treatment system on Well #3 also removes arsenic. All water delivered from Well #3 was treated and had arsenic levels below the new 10 ppb level.

2003 Water Statistics

- Santa Margarita Water Production
⇒ 65 million gallons
- Average Daily Demand
⇒ 178,000 gallons

OPERATIONS

All operators who work for the County are certified by the California Department of Health Services (DHS). They are knowledgeable professionals dedicated to maintaining an excellent water system and providing you with the best quality water possible.

WATER TESTING

Water analyses are performed by the San Luis Obispo County Water Quality Laboratory. The lab is certified by the DHS as an environmental testing laboratory for bacteriological and chemical analyses. Federal and State requirements dictate that all regulatory analyses be performed by certified labs following approved procedures.

GENERAL DRINKING WATER INFORMATION

All drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the USEPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline, 1-800-426-4791.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDs or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. USEPA/ Centers for Disease Control guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline, 1-800-426-4791.

Additionally, the EPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water maintains a website with useful information on drinking water. The address is www.epa.gov/safewater/. Additional information can be obtained by accessing the American Water Works Association's website at www.awwa.org, the DHS website at www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ddwem/index.htm, or by calling John Beaton, Water Quality Manager, at 781-5111.

WATER SYSTEM MASTER PLAN 2003

The County of San Luis Obispo Public Works Department has prepared a Water System Master Plan for CSA-23 in Santa Margarita in order to more effectively provide water service to our customers. The Plan addresses improvements needed to meet the water needs of the community including supplemental water, water storage, and pipeline improvements. The Water System Master Plan for Santa Margarita CSA 23 can be viewed on the County internet web site at <http://slocountywater.org>.

WATER CONSERVATION



We are currently experiencing a drought in Santa Margarita. In order to avoid the mandatory conservation measures needed in the last drought, we are requesting CSA-23 customers to VOLUNTARILY REDUCE WATER USAGE. This is especially important during these dry summer months. As a reminder, we will be placing yellow ALERT signs along El Camino Real. It is our expectation that reducing water usage now will protect the community water supply while causing minimal inconvenience for the residents and businesses of Santa Margarita. If you would like to know more please review the information provided with your June billing statement or visit our website: www.slocountywater.org. You may also contact Frank Honeycutt, Hydraulic Planning Engineer directly at (805) 781-5269.



County of San Luis Obispo
Department of Public Works
County Government Center, Room 207
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

SANTA MARGARITA WATER FACTS

- We use 2 1/2 times as much water in the summer as in the winter
- 2/3 of the summer demand is for landscape water.
- Conserving existing resources reduces the need to develop new, more expensive sources.

Tips to save water, energy, and money

OUTSIDE

Water only as needed

Mulch plants

Water in the morning or evening

Inspect for leaks and broken, blocked or mis-aligned sprinklers

Replace unused lawn with a ground cover

INSIDE

Install low-flow toilets and fixtures

Wash full loads of dishes and clothes

Fix leaks

Turn off the faucet while washing dishes, shaving, brushing your teeth, or soaping in the shower

Take shorter showers

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions regarding this report, please contact John Beaton, Water Quality Manager, at (805) 781-5111 or Email: Jbeaton@co.slo.ca.us.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.SLOCOWATERQUALITYLAB.ORG